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ABSTRACT

This presentation focuses on the qualities of effective teaching. It offers thoughts on the teacher/learner relationship, focusing on the challenge of teaching and the importance of caring about students and connecting with them. Professors' attention to their research over their teaching and the impact of their rigorous workloads is felt to cause them to fail to recognize the importance of allowing time to build relationships with students, relationships that are based on two-way communication. Teaching is compared to advertising in that it must inform, persuade, and also entertain. Three kinds of teaching styles are identified--teacher-centered, content-centered, and student-centered--and weaknesses of each are noted. Characteristics of the ideal teacher are listed, with the comment that good teaching does not come from technique but from the identity and integrity of the teacher. The archenemy of teaching is felt to be fear--fear of subjectivity, fear of judgment from the young, and fear in students that causes them to be silent in class. Effective teaching involves giving students responsibility, providing students with opportunities to become involved, and making frequent checks on their knowledge. (JDD)

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ED 369 324

CHALLENGING, CARING, AND CONNECTING:
Teaching and Reaching the College Student in the 1990s

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This session from the February 1994 Freshman Year Experience Conference in Columbia, SC, focuses on the qualities that can result in an effective style of teaching and is based partly on data from other sources and partly from the presenter's own experience from more than 20 years in the classroom and as a former director of the University 101 freshman seminar at USC. Citing sources such as Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* and Samuel Freedman's *Small Victories*, the presenter concludes that unless we make a deliberate attempt to "know our students," teaching--at best--is less than it could be.

Sanford Wylie writes that a new version of Matthew 5 has been found, and that it differs quite a bit from the old manuscript. According to the new find, Jesus touched off quite a reaction when he first spoke the Beatitudes. Right after he gave them came the following:

Then Simon Peter said, "Are we supposed to know this?"

And Andrew said, "Do we have to write this down?"

And James said, "Will we have to take a test on this?"

And Philip said, "I don't have any paper."

And Bartholomew said, "Do we have to turn this in?"

And John said, "The other disciples didn't have to learn this."

And Matthew said, "May I go to the boys' room?"

And Judas said, "What does this have to do with real life?"

Then one of the Pharisees who was present asked to see Jesus' lesson plan and inquired of Jesus, "Where is your anticipatory set and your objectives in the cognitive domain?"

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And Jesus wept.

During this session, I want to talk about how *fortunate* we are to be teaching college students. Despite the pressures, despite the compression of budgets, despite the long work weeks..and weekends, and despite the doom and gloom messages we sometimes receive in our mail from the administration, I believe--and this is after nearly 22 years-- that teaching at the college level is one of the most spiritually rewarding professions on earth. I believe that with all my heart, and I hope you're here today either because you already share that belief with me, or want to leave here with a renewed sense of challenge about the good work you're already doing.

Will you learn anything new or startling from this session? I suspect you will not. I offer no miraculous panaceas that will turn your dumbest students into geniuses, nor any "tricks of the trade" for cutting down the number of hours it takes to grade a set of papers or to prepare for the next day's classes. What I will offer are a number of stories, some thoughts on the teacher/learner relationship from both expert sources and ordinary people, and an overall thesis that can be reduced to three words: Challenging. Caring. Connecting.

What can I tell *you* about the challenge of teaching? Only that I realize, at this stage in my work, that teaching *never* becomes easy. The longer we teach, the greater the years we must bridge from our age to the age of our students, and the greater the challenge. And just as *we* are challenged, so must we continue to challenge our students-- to learn, to think, to grow, and to develop, not as carbon copies of ourselves, but as individuals who, through *our* refusal to satisfy for the ordinary, have begun to stretch and expand the critical thinking masses of their minds.

And what can I say about caring? Some will tell you that caring is a word that, like "touchy feely," died in the seventies. And good riddance. Yet, properly communicated, when we show we do care about our students as individuals, above and beyond how well or poorly they are

learning, we are bestowing one of the greatest motivators to academic diligence I know of. If that sounds old-fashioned, so be it.

And finally, connecting. In my subject area of advertising, one of the new things we're talking about is something called *relationship marketing*. Many relatively new companies that have enjoyed rapid growth--Ben and Jerry's, The Body Shop, Nike...have created a strong corporate culture that has intuitively integrated and focused all corporate as well as marketing activities into a unified message that says, selling you our products is no longer enough; we must also work to nurture a relationship between our company and its products and those of you who support us through your loyalty to our brands.

Critical to the building of such relationships are a number of avenues for two-way communication between company and consumer. In fact, the traditional custom of communicating to the consumer through advertising alone is too risky a strategy in these recessionary times.

That's why forward-thinking companies are speaking to all constituencies--the retail stores who must stock their products, the consumer who must ultimately buy them, their own employees who must manufacture them to high standards, the suppliers who must furnish them with raw goods, and the stockholders who must support them with financial investment, with a single consistent voice. Even though it may have to say different things to each audience, the messages are consistent in overall tone and approach.

Yet even as they speak, companies are learning to be good listeners, too. They focus just as much on building long term relationships as on making the immediate sale. They maximize feedback by using data based information and by encouraging consumers and other "stakeholders" to talk to them through 800 numbers, surveys and panels, seminars and trade shows. They target not only current, but potential, customers.

Now change the word business to teacher, the words current

customers to students and potential customers to recruitment efforts, the word employees to faculty and staff, the word stockholders to governing bodies, and you begin to see the value of building consistent, long term relationships in colleges and universities.

And I believe those relationships must begin, not at the top, but right in your classrooms and mine.

I'm going to be honest with you. This past fall was not one of my better terms. I was disappointed in what my students achieved and, consequently, disappointed in myself. I spoke with colleagues and found that their thoughts and feelings were not unlike mine. We complained that our students couldn't think. We grumbled that our students couldn't write. And we murmured behind office doors that our students weren't taking their learning seriously, that they were far too busy at other things for their own good. And often we blamed ourselves for failing to challenge students enough, for failing to care enough, for failing to connect enough. It's hard to care, after all, when the reality of shrinking budgets and enrollments are made to seem worse when we are asked to do *more* teaching, serve on *more* committees, work harder than before to earn tenure and promotion, and be accountable for what often seems like every waking moment in our working lives.

Other things bother us, too.

Donald Gray, a professor of English at the University of Indiana, writes about a professor leaving campus for four days to read a paper at a professional meeting. During his absence a colleague taught his classes. The traveling prof read his paper to about seven people. The prof who stayed home taught an additional 150 students for most of the week. Who do you think got more credit, the professor who read the paper or the one who taught his classes? Gray comments on another course, taught in a huge auditorium where most students get a phrase or a sentence and lose the next few, and likens the experience to hearing a conversation in a

crowd or from another room. These are gaps, he comments. Failures to connect that trouble our work, that frustrate effective and satisfying teaching. And so, he concludes, these stories are about gaps between teacher and student...differences in what they know, how they learn, what they expect of a university course, even how they conceive the world. They are stories about the gap between current valuations of teaching and research. Why, he asks, are large numbers of students dumped into an auditorium, to be talked at by someone who hasn't the time, even if he had the wit, to try to find out what they know and how they understand? For the same reason 150 students are dumped into the schedule of the chemistry professor who stayed home--to free someone to do and publish research.

This makes me think of a colleague on our campus--whose reputation as an exceptional teacher is verified by student and peer evaluations-- who was refused tenure recently because the demands of a fulltime high-level administrative position entrusted to him for most of his academic career allowed scant time for scholarship.

It concerns me that, a few short years after the broad reinterpretation of scholarship by Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the financial exigencies we now face have caused us to partially abandon or give mere lip service to a number of the resources we pledged for faculty development, especially that part of faculty development which focuses on good teaching.

Boyer, you will remember, defined four types of scholarship in his 1990 landmark speech and ensuing book, and claimed that each is of equal importance to the future of higher education:

*The DISCOVERER of knowledge , the disciplined researcher.

*The INTEGRATOR of knowledge, the person who makes connections among the disciplines, who is charged with the task of finding patterns and value in what we know.

*The APPLICATOR of knowledge, the scholar with the capacity to relate theory to the reality of life, and to concern themselves with today's crises: deficient schools, pollution, social issues. And Boyer reminds us that not only can knowledge be applied for the good of mankind, but new knowledge actually can emerge from such practice. And finally,

*The TEACHER of knowledge, who must be able to present knowledge to future scholars. Without great teaching, Boyer says, scholarship is like a tree that falls in the woods and is never heard. This means active, not passive, learning. Creative, not conforming, teaching. And collaboration, not competition, among students. Consequential human problems he concludes, will be resolved only through collaboration. We need teachers who are involved in classroom research as well, in the evaluation of their own teaching...even as it is taking place.

Caught by the fiscal shortages of the late eighties, we are hard pressed to live up to Boyer's ideals. Instead of time to focus on how we teach, we're serving on more committees and task forces, operating with fewer support staff and graduate assistants, and being bombarded with faceless messages from electronic mail, faxes, and answering machines! We now have the ability on my campus to "teach" students all over the state on two-way closed circuit TV. We have computers--*and thank goodness we have computers*--in the classrooms, but I often fear that sometimes we seem more interested in how high-tech our equipment is than in how high-contact our teaching is.

And the result of this rigorous workload we face daily? A tendency to forget that good teaching takes time and patience. That it goes beyond the classroom, spills over into office hours and student conferences, advisor-advisee relationships, and career counseling. And my greatest fear is that, in reacting to the demands for greater accountability in the classroom, we will fail to acknowledge that some things cannot be quantified, including one of the essentials of good teaching: *making a connection. Building a*

relationship. Touching a learner. How much time do you allow for that in the normal assignment of workload hours? In preparing this talk, I typed the word "touch" into the thesaurus on my computer. Here's what the thesaurus says about touch: To affect. To influence. To move. To inspire. To believe. To sense. To think, to infer, to judge, to conjecture. To feel.

The same folks who have stern reservations at the idea of touching a student in such ways have their own favorite word : Rigorous. So I typed that word into the thesaurus and it popped up with Extremely severe or stern. Rigid, strict, stringent, austere, severe, stern, hard-line. Inflexible, tough, uncompromising, adamant.

Albert Einstein said, "The worst thing seems to be for schools to work with methods of fear , force and artificial authority. Such treatment destroys the healthy feelings, the integrity, and the self-confidence of pupils." He had a point.

Columnist Ann Humphries writes, "talking down to people produces nothing of value. She continues:

> Her face was flushed and shiny, and the veins in her neck and forehead bulging and blue. She slapped her folders on her desk, then returned to her desk, sitting rigidly for several moments. Her friend passed by. "What happened?" she asked.
>
> "If she talks to me like that again," she snarled, "as if she knows all there is to know, as if I'm an idiot."
>
> "Well, what exactly did she say or do?" asked her friend.
>
> "I can't really put my finger on it," the woman replied. "She just 'talks down' to me."
>
> Asked to describe what "talking down" means, individuals replied:
>
> "They tell me what they think I should do. They think their way is the only way. They give me advice I don't want and didn't ask for."

"They mouth their words too distinctly, as if I cannot hear them. They speak louder. They point their fingers repeatedly or pound the desk. They roll their eyes and sigh. They give me instructions as if I don't have the background or skills to understand the basics. They often rephrase what I say with 'In other words' or 'what you meant to say was....'

"They undervalue what I say, even ignore me. They dismiss my concerns with a frivolous, 'Oh, don't you worry about that,' or 'We've tried that before' in a patronizing tone. They don't ask for input. The communication is all one-way. We are told what to do."

"They are overly familiar, and they address me as if I'm lower than they are. They call me by my first name or some label such as 'You young people,' 'girls,' or 'all you people.'

Okay. So it's been a dreary term. But there's a new one ahead and we can learn from our mistakes. We also can learn from others. Last spring, taking advantage of a new faculty perk, I signed up for an undergraduate course on campus. An intermediate acting course, not related to my discipline of mass communications, but rather related to an avocation--theatre--that I have pursued for the last five or six years.

I called the instructor ahead of time to ask how she would feel about having a middle aged professor in the class. She had been my director for a show and I respected her talent greatly. "Are you going to be serious about this?" she asked. " That's something I'd like to ask each of my students on the very first day of each new term!

At first I felt strange sitting on a bare stage with some 20 *very* young people. But things improved rapidly. I played a scene with a woman less than half my age, and a young chap slapped me on the back when I finished and exclaimed, "That was great man!" I became a player in the "chatter"

that goes on during lulls in instruction. I *became* part of their group. I learned not only how students feel sitting *out there* but also how much energy it takes to keep a class interesting day after day after day.

Looking at another teacher in action, I became aware of just how tough, just how demanding, and just how scary our roles as teachers can be. For we have the power to motivate others, to participate in their development, not only as momentary learners in our classrooms, but as motivated learners for life. Dr. Eliot Engel of North Carolina State University believes teaching is very much like farming. We cultivate our crops in the fall and harvest them in the spring, he explains. We boast of the sprouts which burst into vibrant bloom and sigh over those that withered on the vine, believing like a farmer that luck had much to do with the blooms and out own failure with the blights. Finally, Engel warns that a society blighted by a dearth of great teachers soon finds itself in danger of growing nothing but a bunch of blooming idiots.

To what else can we compare advertising?

In his book, *The Discourse of Advertising*, Guy Cook reminds us that advertising is one of many discourses essential to human interaction. All forms of discourse either inform, persuade, entertain. Advertising by its nature, must do all three. It must inform to clearly identify what it is promoting. It surely must persuade, for that is its main function. Yet it also must entertain , else few would pay attention to it. For vastly different reasons, teaching must satisfy all three modes of discourse as well to be effective. To say our teaching must inform is almost a redundancy. More open to discussion is whether teaching involves the art of persuasion, and the answer must be "yes" if we are talking in broad terms about instilling a lifelong love of learning in our students--or earning their respect as a facilitator of knowledge. Finally, teaching must also entertain in order to engage learners in a positive and active manner. I have heard of a professor on our campus who is a well known scholar in

his field. In the classroom, however, he reads his lectures, the same as he would read a paper at a scholarly meeting. After an hour, he asks for questions. Usually there are none. Students in his large undergraduate classes complain little, for they don't care to speak. But in his honors classes and graduate seminars it's a different story. They vent their frustration on evaluation forms, claiming it's dull to listen for an hour without being allowed to break in. Which makes teaching like advertising in still another way: the need to know one's audience .... and to address it accordingly.

Volumes have been written about effective teaching. Theories abound. One of them I particularly like goes like this.

There are three kinds of teaching styles. The first is **teacher centered.** *If it were not for me, this course would not be as good as it is. It's my charismatic approach that makes students want to learn.*

The second is **content centered.** *I must adhere to the goals of the course and cover everything from A to Z that's required. If I don't, students may not be prepared for the next course.*

The third is **student centered**. *I've got a bunch of individuals in this room that are only somewhat like the bunch I had last term. So if I want them to learn, I've got to know something about them, how they learn best, what's keeping them from understanding me, and so forth. I may even adjust my style and the amount of time I spend on each topic in the interest of better learning for all.*

However,

The **teacher centered** teacher may digress too much from the content and ignore individual student needs.

The **content centered** teacher may rush through material with the explanation, "I don't have time for questions," thus shutting the door for much learning to take place.

The **student centered** teacher may become bogged down with trying

to accommodate every student so that little learning actually takes place. But despite their shortcomings, some awareness of and practice of all three approaches is essential to effective teaching.

These theoretical models remind me that each of us is really a mix of all three types. How fortunate, for students bring to the classroom a colorful mix of learning preferences...for visual information or spoken information or hands on work or concepts vs. details or details vs. concepts...and the more we offer them a diversity of teaching approaches , the greater the chance we'll reach the majority of them.

But what about *your* ideal teacher?

Take a moment and jot down some adjectives that describe the best teachers you have ever had.

Now take a moment and jot down some adjectives that describe the worst teachers you have ever had.

What did you write? What does it tell you about how YOU teach or how you ASPIRE to teach?

When students were asked in a survey to rank the characteristics of good teaching, they listed CLARITY and ORGANIZATION at the top, followed in close order by those things that make the teacher human...approachable, understanding, and so forth. One teaching expert likens teaching to coaching, explaining that a good teacher challenges students and works them hard, but somehow students know that this same teacher cares about their success.

Other studies show that students value these characteristics in a teacher: HIGH LEVELS OF INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM, A GENUINE EFFORT TO MAKE COURSES INTERESTING, USING FREQUENT EXAMPLES AND ANALOGIES IN TEACHING, REFERRING TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AS APPROPRIATE, AND RELATING THE COURSE TO OTHER FIELDS OF STUDY.

In fact, studies of teaching confirm that the best learning takes place when the teacher involves students in the learning. Through discussion, through library research, through oral presentations, through small discussion groups which report their findings to the rest of the class. At the heart of the equation is the effective teacher.

Add ENTHUSIASM and CLEAR, WELL ORGANIZED PRESENTATIONS, and the fact that students appreciate teachers who assign more work and more difficult work, and you have a well rounded picture of the effective teacher: one who is actively involved with students, who comes to class prepared, who gives students a voice in the classroom, and who is academically demanding but highly nurturing. Think if you will of the teacher as a coach, challenging students and working them hard, but somehow demonstrating that he or she cares about the success of each individual.

If students are not stimulated by great teaching, what's the point? And if teachers are not constantly motivated by the fact that learning indeed is taking place, how can they be stimulating in the classroom?

Teaching authority Parker J. Palmer underscores his belief that good teaching does not come from technique, but rather from the identity and integrity of the teacher. It comes not from methodology but from learning more about the human dimensions of the craft. By focusing on what he terms "The Human Condition," he claims we will discover a new world of discourse, but not before we confront the archenemy of teaching, which is FEAR.

Palmer says when he teaches poorly it is not because of poor technique but because he has allowed fear to get the upper hand. He enumerates three sources of that fear:

The first is our fear of subjectivity, our dominant way of knowing in the academy. Objectivism, the academy's prized way of knowing, is marked by its insistence that only at a distance can we know things truly

and well. That kind of teaching, Palmer says, makes us into people who want to transform the world, but who refuse to be transformed, and who tell our students: It has all been worked out. Your opinions don't matter.

The second is the fear **in** our students. When Palmer asked faculty what their biggest obstacle to good teaching was, they often said "bad students." The silent students who never respond when we ask a question. This silence, Palmer explains, is the same silence of blacks in the presence of whites, of women in the presence of men, of the powerless in the presence of people with power. It is the silence of people who have been told that their voice has no value. They know that in silence there is safety. It is a silence born of fear.

Parker's third and final fear is our own fearful hearts. Like writing, teaching is a vulnerable act. To teach well, we must reveal things about which we care deeply. The courage to teach well is the courage to risk the judgment that comes when we expose our passions to public scrutiny, fearing judgment from the young. When the young do not consent to be mentored by the elders, something vital has been taken from the elders' lives.

One teacher who risked those fears is Jessica Siegel, whose remarkable success with economically disadvantaged students is chronicled in the book *Small Victories* by author and journalist Samuel G. Freedman.

Since its founding, Freedman writes, America has been torn between its belief in the perfectibility of all citizens and its longing for a British-style elite: It wanted to be both Eton and Eden. Already saddled with those impossible expectations, the public school system from the 1960s on was handed every problem being abdicated by family, church, and community. We see those problems in Siegel's freshman English class at Seward Park High School in the beleaguered Lower East Side of New York. Ranked among the worst 10 percent of high schools in the state of New York, 92

percent of Seward Park graduates go on to college. The explanation lies in its dedicated teachers, one of whom is Jessica Siegel who has the courage to teach in the face of insurmountable odds.

In the first week of classes, she adds her own inimitable style to argue the value of writing. "Let's face it," she says, spreading her arms in a gesture of confession, "we don't write much anymore. And I include myself here. It's too easy to turn on the TV or go to the movies. Even writing letters. You want to talk to your uncle in Puerto Rico, you pick up the phone. So the only thing most of you write is your homework. And you hate it. Well, just like an athlete has to warm up, our journals will be a way for you to warm up, get your thoughts going without worrying about spelling and grammar. It's a way to get your ideas on paper."

She leans forward. "I want you to write what you feel. You want to write how much you hate this class? Fine with me. I will never say, 'Hey you misspelled that word. I will never say, 'You failed, you're stupid.' The idea is to get you to write. So now I want you to do something for me. I want you to write a composition on what makes a good teacher."

School explains only so much about a student, Jessica believes. Some of her colleagues think the less they find out about their kids' outer lives, the better. Jessica respects some of these teachers but she cannot share their ways. She must know more. As did a college professor observed by Ernest Boyer, who recalled walking into a classroom on a Monday morning where the professor sat down and had the courage to say to the class, "Nothing happened last Friday, did it? I went home depressed and so did you." That broke the place open, and started an inquiry into teaching and learning that went on for an hour, and the student learning curve went shooting up for the rest of the term.

Not too long ago I taught a sophomore principles of advertising class for the first time in seven years. I knew that teaching a class of nearly 90 was going to demand a different style than teaching a section of 17 in

my advertising writing course. I knew how students learned best and it wasn't in the bowling alley of a class I was assigned, with a wide center aisle and seats nailed to the floor in neat rows of ten. No, I knew students learned best. in small classes offering involvement through discussion. Through frequent checks on knowledge, such as regular essay quizzes and feedback methods, and ongoing reasons to make students want to attend daily.

So I took some risks. First I broke the 90 students into nine groups of ten each, with a team leader who took attendance on a form created for the task. *I gave them* ***responsibility*** *as one reason to attend.*

I rotated teams each week from back to the front of class so each student sat up front at least during twice during the term and earned points for discussion. *I gave everyone his day in class to become* ***involved.***

I required a short article report each week, but staggered the due dates by group, so I wasn't overwhelmed and could make meaningful comments on the papers.

I had different groups stay once every two weeks to give me feedback on how the class was doing. This shortened one of every four classes by about twelve minutes, and it was well worth it.. the students were willing to compliment and criticize and offer suggestions.

My student evaluations, while positive, reminded me that you can't please 'em all:

For the most part Jewler was a good professor but in the beginning he seemed a little out of sorts. He created a syllabus and a plan but he failed at trying to adhere to the syllabus, thereby confusing the entire class. Only three weeks before the final.....(he) decides it's going to be on the entire book. Then he changes his mind once again saying...last four chapters and essays. Then he says it will be combination of essays and multiple. Get the picture!!

And another: *..one of the most interesting courses I've ever*

participated in.....liked that he used real examples of advertising and current issues.....students respect him. ...very concerned with our concerns on grading, etc....have learned more through his method of testing (regularly scheduled quizzes) than I would have otherwise.

As luck would have it, the VERY NEXT term I was assigned to teach the same course..with one major difference. Instead of the monster group, which I was getting pretty comfortable with, I was to teach an honors section with only five students. I once read that the smaller the class, the more difficult the teaching. And I believed it after the first day of that class. But here are the comments from those five:

"I am learning more in this class than I would in a class where you read the book, listen to a lecture, memorize the material for a test, and then forget it the next day."

"Today...was pretty nice because students got to take control of the class. With a student up front, there was no pressure to be correct with your answers. With you there helping, it just made a big difference. I liked it."

"...it requires participation, which makes the information stick better."

And this comment from a student who "taught" the class on the day she wrote this: *"One thing that is very annoying, I'm sure, from a teacher's point of view..when people don't read the assignment. I wasn't sure whether I was lecturing or discussing. Since I had read it, I thought I could say, 'read this in the book' and people could do it, and we could move on to more interesting stuff."*

In the effective classroom, students are so thoroughly engaged in the learning process that, without their presence, the class just doesn't work. And so they make it a point to be there day after day after day.
Compare this with an anecdote about another teacher, as written by one of his students:

"From the first day of class, the instructor came in, stood at the lectern and read his notes. I did not care much for what he said because I had no empathy with him (it wasn't because he was boring). No one can be empathetic with a machine. But one day he came in and said, "I am really tired," and walked to a chair and sat down. He shared a dream he had had the night before. He was giving a lecture with only two students present. As he went to leave, he found his shoes were nailed to the floor. He talked about having taught in a prison and how he was scared of his students at first. It was great. Now the classes are better, even though he still reads his notes, because it's more personal. I can have empathy with a person who has funny dreams, and gets scared and tired."

Or as Eliot Engel writes: "Great teachers know their subjects well. But they also know their students well. In fact, great teaching fundamentally consists of constructing a bridge from the subject taught to the student learning it. Both sides of that bridge must be surveyed with equal care if the subject matter of the teacher is to connect with the gray matter of the student. But great teachers transcend simply knowing their subjects and students well. They also admire both deeply."

But if you are ever anxious about your teaching , listen to an English professor who publicly confessed that, after 18 years in the classroom, he was surer of what not to do, but less certain about what to do as an alternative. Teaching gets harder rather than easier by the time one gets good at it, he claims, and the confidence that comes from real accomplishment, in the face of occasional failure, is harder to sustain. One changes the text and alters the approach in order to learn. One listens a lot more, I think, and tries to answer questions that students ask, rather than give out information that only grade-hounds gather for future reference. One teaches more by intuition than by logic. And waits for the anonymous phone call in the night: **"You have been discovered. You are a fraud."**

To which a professor emeritus of sociology responded with a story

about a young faculty member who sought advice from one of *his* senior colleagues. "Sometimes," he said, "when I'm facing my students, I feel like I'm a fraud. Have you ever had that feeling?" The elder one answered, "Certainly. I've felt that way many times and I hope it doesn't bother you as much as it did me. Now I think that as long as you feel you're a fraud you're probably doing a better job of teaching, but if you ever become convinced you're not, you won't be teaching; *you'll be preaching.*

Which is what happens to the college professor created by playwright David Mamet in his devastating work, *Oleanna.*
British critic John Peter comments:

"David Mamet's play gives us John, a college professor who is panting with anxiety over the tenure committee's imminent decision about his future. John is a familiar academic type: the man who knows that the word education derives from the Latin word to lead, but for whom it simply means that he is out in front. His is the ghastly egomaniacal sincerity of the teacher who does not really believe in teaching but relishes the opportunity to lay down the law.

"John has never forgotten how he hated his own pompous, unfeeling college instructors. He thinks he became one so that he could do better by young people than his elders had done by him; but you sense that his real reason is to get his own back. Education as revenge.

"Carol is a student: tense, earnest, resentful, and confused. For her, education is a means to an end that is clear neither to us or to her. "Teach me," Carol cries, as if she was begging someone to please put the light on. Carol's problem is two-fold. She has a dim, fierce, limited little mind, which constantly bumps up against concepts and ideas as if they were pieces of furniture in a dark room. But her reaction to this is one of resentment. It is the furniture's fault that you bump into it, not yours. To fail your exams is not your failure, but that of the system. Teachers ought to teach, they owe you that; but you resent the fact that they know things

you do not.

"To put it simply, John teaches not in order to lead, but to hear himself talk; he listens admiringly as his brain disposes of the problems and uncertainties of others. Actually, to others, when he explains something, it only sounds more confusing. For him, education is teacher-centered: the pupil's performance is a litmus paper which reacts to his own superior chemistry.

"He has the power, the pupil has the responsibility: the definition of an intellectual whore. "I'm not here to teach you," he brazenly tells Carol, "I'm here to tell you what I think." Like a political party which keeps being voted back in to office, the teacher becomes lordly and insensitive to the needs of his charges, and the teaching process itself, with its problems, difficulties, and beguiling intellectual paradoxes, becomes an object of private worship carried out in front of admiring witnesses."

Jacque Barzun, American historian and educator and former Provost of Columbia University, once wrote about his early years in the classroom:

"In recounting my apprenticeship, I called teaching backbreaking work and later hinted that steady teaching would fray the nerves of an ox. These are both sober statements. An hour of teaching is certainly the equivalent of a whole morning of office work. The pace, the concentration, the output of energy in office work are child's play, compared with handling a class, and the smaller the class, the harder the work. Tutoring a single person--as someone has said--makes you understand what a dynamo feels like when it is discharging into a non-conductor."

Alfred North Whitehead, American philosopher, mathematician, logician, wrote in a 1928 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly:*

"The justification for a university is that it preserves the connection between knowledge and the zest of life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. The university imparts information, but it imparts it imaginatively....A university which fails in

this respect has no reason for existence....A university is imaginative or it is nothing--at least nothing useful."

Russ Edgerton of the American Association of Higher Education once claimed that, "on many campuses, teaching is almost like sex in the Victorian age--it's something you do, and sometimes even enjoy, but it's a private thing, not to be talked about in polite company."

I challenge you to do just the opposite. Enjoy your teaching. Talk about how you enjoy it to others. Share what it is that you do that makes it work. Challenge, care, connect. And do so as frequently--and as exuberantly--as possible.